

had no hold over his mind. The most explosive, of English thinkers had no master and left no school. Men who agreed in nothing else united in detestation of his creed. It is part of the eternal fascination of the grim old warrior that he stands out in defiant isolation, too paradoxical to prevail, yet too powerful to ignore. Not a master-builder, perhaps, but a Master Mind.

Hobbes came prematurely into the world in a Wiltshire vicarage when the Spanish Armada frightened his mother, and he used to say that he was the twin-brother of fear. The precocious lad attracted the attention of his schoolmaster, a good classic, to whom he presented a translation of the *Medea* into Latin iambics before entering Magdalen Hall in his fifteenth year. His father cared nothing for learning, but his uncle, a prosperous glover, provided the necessary funds. In his brief Latin autobiography he merely records that he studied the logic and physics of Aristotle. Aubrey, his devoted friend and biographer, adds that in those days he cared little for logic, yet thought himself a good disputant. Scholasticism was dying and science was in its infancy. He never spoke of his university with respect or affection, disliking both the laxity of the undergraduates and the unappetizing fare of the lecture-room.

After taking his degree at the age of nineteen he was recommended by the principal of his college to the eldest son of the Earl of Devonshire, who believed, according to Aubrey, that he would profit more in his learning if he had a scholar of his own age to wait on him than a grave doctor. Less of a tutor than a page, Hobbes went hunting and hawking with his young master and kept his privy purse. It was the luckiest incident in his life, establishing the delightful relations with

the Cavendish family which o'nly terminated
seventy years
later with his death, and opening the door to
cultivated society,
an excellent library, and foreign travel. He
bought copies of
the classics which he carried in his pocket. The
most memor-
able intellectual experience of these years was
his friendship
with Bacon. The Lord Chancellor used to walk in
his garden
at Gorhambury, attended by one or other of his
gentlemen
with ink and paper to jot. down his thoughts.
This task,
according to Bacon, was better performed by-
Hobbes than by
anyone else, for the notes taken by others were
often un-
intelligible since they themselves had failed to
understand.
The younger man also assisted the elder in
translating several